Placochelys

Placochelys ('flat-plate turtle") is an extinct genus of placodont reptiles erected by Otto Jaekel in 1902.

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Placochelys

Temporal range: Mid to Late Triassic

Restored *Placochelys placodonta* skull at the Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Reptilia
Superorder:	†Sauropterygia
Order:	†Placodontia
Family:	†Placochelyidae
Genus:	†*Placochelys* Jaekel, 1902

Fossil records

Fossils of *Placochelys* dates back to the Triassic period (age range: 221.5 to 205.6 million years ago). They have been found in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy.[1]

Species

This genus includes only one species:

- *Placochelys placodonta* Jaekel, 1902 (from Upper Ladinian of Hungary)

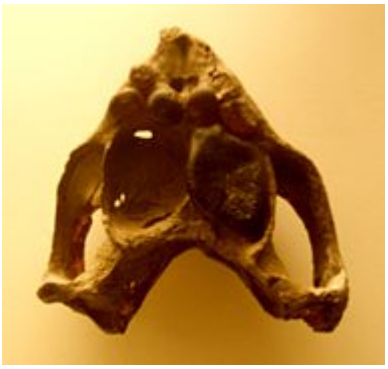
Description

Placochelys looked remarkably similar to a sea turtle, and grew to about 90 centimetres (3.0 ft) in length. It had a flat turtle-like carapace covered with knobbly plates, and a compact triangular skull. Its beaked skull had powerful muscles. It had only two pairs of palatal teeth, a large posterior pair, and a small rostral pair. The specialized broad teeth on the palate, were most likely used for crushing shellfish and hard-shelled prey. Its limbs were paddle-shaped for swimming, although, unlike modern sea turtles, they still had discernable toes, and it also had a short tail.[2]

Gallery

Life restoration of *Placochelys*

Placochelys placodonta fossil skull, lateral view



Placochelys placodonta skull seen from below

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References

1. Paleobiology Database (http://fossilworks.org/bridge.pl?a=taxonInfo&taxon_no=36537)
2. Palmer, D., ed. (1999). *The Marshall Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Animals*. London: Marshall Editions. p. 71. ISBN 1-84028-152-9.

External links

- The cranial anatomy of Placochelys placodonta Jaekel, 1902, and a review of the Cyamodontoidea (Reptilia, Placodonta) (2001) (https://archive.org/details/cranialanatomyof45riep)
- PLACODONTS: THE BIZARRE 'WALRUS-TURTLES' OF THE TRIASSIC (http://www.oceansofkansas.com/placodnt.html)

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